1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

A further mysterious feature of these ceremonies is that

the two rites which seem to bring women into special relation with the dairy are limited to the Tartharol. If these rites be regarded as relics of a time when women had more to do with dairy operations than at present, the possibility follows that this former function of women was limited to one division of the Todas.

I could obtain no explanation of the meaning of the word *pülpali*, used for the imitation dairy made in the Tarthar ceremonies. *Püli* means tamarind, and in a ceremony of the Nairs of Malabar called *pulikati*, performed in the ninth month of pregnancy, the woman drinks tamarind juice.[1] It is possible that the two ceremonies have a common origin, the only indication of which in the Toda ceremony lingers in the name of 'tamarind dairy.' It is, however, possible that the dairy is so called because it is made on the outskirts of the village, though I do not know definitely that the word *pül* would be used for outskirts in this special sense.

Uncovering the Child's Face

While in the seclusion-hut with its mother and for some time after, the child has its face covered, and no one except the mother is allowed to see it. At the end of the third month[2] the face of the child is uncovered, and this ceremony is called *mokh mûtâr terithti*, "child outside he opens," or, more shortly, *mûtâr terthpimi*. If the child is a boy, he is taken by his father early in the morning to the front of the dairy, and both father and child bow down at the threshold of the dairy (*pavnersatiti*), the child being put down by his father so that his forehead touches the threshold. The child is then taken to the place where the buffaloes are standing, and there the face is uncovered, the child being held so that he looks towards the sun when the covering is removed.

If the child is a girl, she is taken by her mother to the *majvatvaiidrn*, the place where the women go to receive

[1] Fawcett, *Bull. Madras Museum*, vol. iii. p. 242.

[2] According to one account the ceremony takes place on the fortieth day after birth.

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852 buttermilk from the dairyman, and there the mother uncovers
854 the child's face.

I was not told that the covering of the face is designed to protect the child from the influence of the evil eye, but this is the probable motive. The object of the ceremony is probably to minimise the danger incurred when the covering is removed by putting the child, if a boy, into relation with the three sacred objects, the dairy, the herd of buffaloes, and the sun. If a girl, the child is taken to the spot nearest to the dairy where women are allowed to go.

NAMING THE CHILD

553 The child is named after its face has been uncovered. The
852 ceremony is called *per vasthpimi*, "name we give," and it may take place immediately after the ceremony of uncovering the face, or a few days later. In the former case, the child, if a boy, is taken by his father from the place where the buffaloes are standing to the front of the house, and there the father shaves the middle part of the head of the child. Then the boy's maternal uncle (*mun*) gives the name, and promises a calf, saying, *pòl ud todein*, "calf one I have given," followed by the name of the child,[1] and raises each foot to the head of the boy and touches his forehead, the salutation on this occasion being called *kalkartiti*. Three grains of barley are put into the mouth of the boy and three into his back-hair, and then the grains are thrown away.

There was some doubt as to the relative by whom a girl is named. It seemed clear that the name is given by a woman, and I was told definitely by some that it is given by the father's sister (*mumi*) of the child. The wife of the *mun* would also be the *mumi* of the child, and it is possible that this relative may give the name. No calf is given to a girl, this being only done when boys are named.

After the naming, the parents of the child may give a feast
[574] if they are rich, but this seems to be now exceptional. After
953 receiving its name, the child is given food for the first time, having been suckled up to this day, but my notes do not

[1] For the nature of the name see Chapter XXVI.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

make it clear whether the child is weaned at this time or continues to be suckled.

When the child is shaved, a bone of a bird called *mâtpül* and a stone procured from the bazaar called *kansutimani* are put round its wrist. The bone is cut into small pieces and strung alternately with pieces of the stone so as to form a kind of bangle. It was said that the child would become ill if this charm were not used, and the name of the stone (*kan* = eye) shows that it is intended to avert the evil eye.

The Tersamptpimi Ceremony

This is a ceremony closely connected with the naming of a child, but only performed after the second funeral (*marvainolkedr*) of a Tarthar man. It seemed probable that at one time the name was actually given during the *tersamptpimi* ceremony, but as the *marvainolkedr* of Tartharol now occur only at considerable intervals, it has become the custom to bestow the name in connexion with the ceremony of uncovering the face.

The ceremony of *tersamptpimi* is performed on the day after the funeral, this day being called *karvnol*, and as in the ceremony of naming, the chief part is taken by the child's maternal uncle. The uncle comes to the village where the child is living, bringing a stake of wood of the wild rose[1] called *kadakmän*. He splits the piece of wood into two pieces, each of which is called *ketkark*, and putting the hair of the child between the two *ketkark*, he cuts off a lock. If the child is of the Tarthar division, the hair is cut with a piece of sharpened iron called *kanab*,[2] while the hair of a Teivali child is cut with an ordinary knife (*turi*), but both *kanab* and *turi* on this occasion receive the special name of *tersampki*. After cutting the lock of hair, the uncle puts it on one side together with the *ketkark* and the *tersampki*, and if the boy has not already been named, the name is now given by the uncle and a calf promised.

Before this ceremony, the bangle of bone and stone, put

[1] *Rosa Leschenaultiana.* [2] Lit. 'eye arrow.'

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852 round the wrist of the child when it was shaved, is taken off and replaced by a piece of creeper called *peival*.[1] After the ceremony the *peival* is removed.

There was some doubt as to what was done with the lock of hair. Mr. Natesa Sastri states[2] that the hair is carefully preserved, but my informants did not confirm this, and it seemed as if they did not even adopt the precaution of hiding the hair, which is generally practised (see p. 268).

THE EAR-PIERCING CEREMONY

852 The ceremony of piercing the ears is called *kevi kûtiti*, and
574 may be done at any time from infancy up to even twenty
431 years of age. The ceremony is often delayed until it can be performed for several members of a family at the same time in order to avoid the considerable expense connected with it. The ceremony must be done on a Sunday or Wednesday, and there must be no *kedr* in the clan, *i.e.*, it must not be performed if the funeral ceremonies of a member of the clan are still unfinished.

On the day appointed for the ceremony many guests assemble at the village, and the boys whose ears are to be pierced are dressed in their best clothing. The piercing is performed by two men, one for each ear. One is the mother's brother (*mun*) of the boy, while the other is a man of the division to which the boy does not belong—a Teivali man if the boy is one of the Tartharol and *vice versa*.

The piercing is done with a piece of a small ring, so fine that it is like a needle. The ring used in this way may be of silver or gold, the latter only being used by the richer members of the community.

Each boy then salutes (*kalmelpudithti*) all those present older than himself, both male and female. Each man as he raises his foot to the head of the boy says :—

Tânenmâ,	*târmâmâ*,	*pathk mâ*,	*pada mâ*,
May it be well,	may it be well,	may he prosper,	may he prosper,
îr, anûr ôl mâ,		*âr mokh pai mâ*.	
buffaloes 100 may he rule,		six sons may he have.	

[1] Probably here *pei* = demon (see p. 180).

[2] *Loc. cit.*

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Each man also gives four annas to the boy and each chief Toda may give one rupee. 852 574

The salutation of their elders seems to be conditional on this gift of money. One of the most recent cases in which the ceremony has been performed was when the ears of six of the sons of Tikievan of Kuudr and his brothers (56) were pierced. On this occasion Tikievan refused to take any money from those present, and the boys only saluted those men who had celebrated the occasion by giving buffaloes to their father. 431

As the *kalmelpudithti* salutation was omitted, the words given above as usually said by each person were on this occasion said collectively by all present while the six boys bowed down their heads to the ground. The ears of these boys were pierced by Teikudr (63), the first cousin of Sulnir, the mother of the boys, but regarded according to the Toda system as elder brother of the mother.

The representative of the Tartharol who pierced the other ear was Pidrvan (9), probably chosen because he was one of the oldest and most influential of the Todas who lived at Pakhalkudr, not far from Peivòrs, the home of the boys.

After the ceremony all those present receive two balls of the food called *ashkkartpimi*, even a young child receiving his two balls of food. Each person then makes a hole in his food, into which ghi is poured, and all eat, washing their hands afterwards in water brought from the *ars nipa*.

Only the ears of boys are pierced, and a boy may not enter upon the more sacred offices of the dairy till this ceremony has been performed. Among the Teivaliol, he cannot become *palol*, *wursol*, or *kaltmokh*, but he may be *palikartmokh*. Among the Tartharol, a boy cannot become *palikartmokh* at any kind of dairy till the ear-piercing ceremony has taken place.

In the case of the ceremony for the sons of Tikievan I inquired into the actual expenses of the day. These were as follows:—

grain	17 rupees
jaggery	10 ,,
rice	7 ,,
10½ *headi* of ghi . .	21 ,,
tobacco and salt . .	2 ,,

amounting to 57 rupees.

852 431 On the other hand, six buffaloes were given to Tikievan; two by the Badaga Monegar of Tuneri; one each from Perner and Tebner (68), whose daughter Sinmokh had married Piliagar, one of the boys. The other two buffaloes were given by Teikudr, the uncle of the boys who had taken part in the ear-piercing.

Several of these buffaloes were either given in return for buffaloes which Tikievan had previously given, or Tikievan would be expected to give buffaloes in return when any suitable occasion arose in the families of the donors.

302 the method of wearing the hair under different conditions corresponding to those of males.

[765] After a funeral the Tarthar division of the Todas except the Melgarsol shave their heads, and this may also happen in connexion with vows made at the Hindu temple at Nanjankudi or elsewhere.

● [852] The hair of a child is shaved about the third month of life (see p. 332), so that the head has the appearance shown in Figs. 63 and 64. The head is shaved on the top and sides, and in a strip from the top to the forehead, so that three locks are left, two in front, called the *mithati* (*? marithati*), and one behind, called the *kut*.

In the case of a girl, there is some difference in the method of shaving according to the position of the child in the family. If a girl is the eldest of the family, she wears three locks like a boy, but younger girls and the eldest girl, if she should have an elder brother, wear only the two front locks, the *mithati*.

SKIN-MARKS

304 The only kind of skin-mark made on males takes the form
761 of a cicatrix on the right shoulder and, less commonly, on the
755 elbow. It is produced by means of a stick made hot by the drill method of producing fire, exactly as in the production of fire for ceremonial purposes. The operation is not, however, accompanied by any ceremonial and may be performed by anyone. The marks are made when a boy is about twelve years old, at which age he begins to milk the buffaloes. The object of the marking is to cure the pain arising from the fatigue of milking. If the operation has not the desired result and the boy still feels the fatiguing effect of milking, a second mark is made, and occasionally a third or fourth may be necessary. In one case, in which a man had three marks one on the shoulder and two on the elbow, the third mark was not made till he was fifteen or sixteen years of age, three or four years after the first mark had been produced. This was done because, even after this lapse of time, he still suffered
304 from aching in his arm after milking the buffaloes. Another

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

belonging to one division acts when the girl undergoing the ceremony belongs to the other.

One of the most obscure of Toda ceremonies is that called *tirsampāṇi*, which is performed together with or later than the ceremony of name-giving when a child is about three months old. The chief feature of the ceremony is that a lock of the child's hair is cut by the maternal uncle of the child, the hair of a Tarthar child being cut with a piece of sharpened iron called *kanad*, while the hair of a Teivali child is cut with an ordinary knife. The special interest, however, for our present purpose lies in the fact that this ceremony must be performed on the day after the second funeral of a Tarthar man, and this whether the child be Tarthar or Teivali.

This ceremony points to the existence of a belief in the influence of the spirit of the dead man, and I have already (p. 404) given reasons why it is probable that this influence should be regarded as good rather than bad. But, whether good or bad, we are left wholly without a clue why this influence should be exerted by the ghosts of the Tartharol and not by those of the Teivalilol.

In the ceremonies connected with childbirth the ritual of one division differs from that of the other more widely than in any other case. The most striking difference is that the ceremonial of the artificial dairy is limited to the Tartharol, and here again it is possible that the difference is a secondary consequence of the difference in dairy organisation. In the chapter dealing with these ceremonies, I have thrown out the conjecture that the use of an artificial dairy, and of threads from the *maduvai*, or sacred dairy garment, may be a survival of a time when women had more to do with the dairy ritual than they have at present; and if there is anything in this conjecture, it would point to this connexion of women with the dairy having been limited to the Tartharol, or to its having persisted longer in this division.

The fact that a Tarthar woman drinks milk drawn by a Melgara man, while a Teivali woman drinks water which is assumed to be the milk of a pregnant buffalo, again brings the differences into relation with the dairy ritual, but another

young mother—infanticidal, polyandrous—is sitting on the earthen floor, just within the doorway, enveloped in a mantle of unbleached cotton. On her left arm, snuggling next her bare body, inside the garment, lies something like a comic doll, with long black hair, cream-coloured skin and pink points. The palm of the woman's right hand, uppermost, is directed towards the child. Her body, foreshortened by reason of the lowness of the door. The nut brown gipsy face, all eyes and teeth, just a bit delicate, is upturned towards the visitor: and speaking volumes by look and by attitude of hand, appeals for a present for the one-month-old. The inside of the room—such as remains visible—pitch-dark. There she was, smiling away, little knowing of my groundless suspicions. CHAP. VII. 546

A boy is named—peru or peuru or heuruwa name—and his ears are bored some time within about three months of his birth. 553 552

The child appears to be kept out of sight until the naming day; when the father, unaccompanied by the mother, takes it, hidden in the folds of his mantle, up to one of the sacred buildings of his Clan: and standing in front of the door, but outside of the surrounding wall, salutes the sanctuary with hand to forehead. Then kneeling on the ground, he for the first time opens out the infant's head to vision, and presses its little forehead down till it touches the soil, names the child, reciting the following prayer; 'dâneuma, mokh ulauma, ki ulauma, ôr ulauma, karr ulauma, ellam ulauma;' the meaning of which is: 'Be beneficent: may it be well with the children, the people, the cattle, the calves, and everyone.'[1] 553 712

I see now before me, a woman who had accompanied her husband till within *sight* of the building, standing on an eminence, witnessing from a distance, with hand shading 553

[1] Strictly speaking, the prayer means, 'May it be well with the *male* children, the *men*, the *oxen*, the *female* calves'—in fact, all that is useful—'and everyone;' in which latter category are probably included the women and girls.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

642 With the arrival of the British in the Nilgiris, Mr. Sullivan, the first
622 European official, appointed a headman known by the Badaga name
of *mavegar*. He was drawn from the Kuur clan of the Teivilkh moiety,
649 without any consideration for the social organization of the tribe as a
[614] whole, and made responsible for the assessment of the sum which the
Todas pay to the Government for their grazing rights, etc. The tribe
looks upon this office, filled during my stay in the Blue Mountains
first by Pillar (52) in 1939 and then by Pilkhlod in 1949, as that of
a servant, entrusted with the task of acting as a go-between with the
Indian authorities, and has no consideration for it at all.

642 There exists a supreme Toda council known as the *noim*, and
623 smaller *noims* are also in existence within each clan. These decide the
692 inner affairs of the *mands*, while the great *noim* deals with the affairs
[614] of the whole tribe. Its members are recruited from only four Toda
clans, the three Tardharsh ones of Kuub, Norsh and Tarar, and the
chief Teivilkh one of Kuur. And even then, they must come from
sub-lineages within each of these clans. Its duties consist in the settle-
ment of civil disputes arising between individuals, families and clans,
and it also has wide functions in connection with Toda ceremonial.
[684] Its most important business appears to be the settling of disputes
[648] arising out of the custom of stealing wives from other men, and of
deciding the amount of compensation due to the injured party. When
affairs involving relations with the Badagas are in question, it is this
assembly which a fifth member joins, a Badaga from the village of
Tuneri, as has already been mentioned earlier (see p. 246).

2. CUSTOMS AND INSTITUTIONAL WAYS WITH A BEARING ON A STUDY OF POLYGAMY

553 Children among the Todas receive their names very early. But whereas
858 this is done very simply in the case of girls – the grandmother, either
paternal or maternal, of the oldest woman of the *mand* giving the little
girl her name – it is done with great ceremony in the case of boys.

553 In the *per vaithpimi* ceremony, which takes place when the child is
● 852 three months old, at the time of uncovering its face (see Rivers, *The*
Todas, p. 331), the boy is taken by his father to where the buffaloes
302 stand at the *mand*, and the hair of his head shaved off, but only across
the middle from ear to ear leaving it long behind and in a fringe over
the forehead. The father does the shaving, but it is the maternal uncle,
[604] the *mam*, who gives the name. He also promises to give a calf to the

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

child, and salutes it in the characteristic Toda fashion, which consists of putting his head under each of the little boy's feet.

Naming sometimes also takes place at the *tersamtpimi*, but because this ceremony can only be held on the day after the second funeral (*marvainolkir*) of a Tardharsh man, it is usual now to give a boy his name at the *per vasthpimi*. For the other occasion he has to wait approximately three years, and then when such a funeral has taken place, his *mam* will come to the village where he is living the day afterwards with a piece of wood of the wild rose. He will split the stick into two pieces, and grasping a lock of the boy's hair will cut it off with a piece of sharpened iron if he is a Tardharsh, and with an ordinary knife if he be a Teivilkh. The child will be given its name now by the maternal uncle if this has not already been done earlier at the face-uncovering, and it will be promised a calf.

The hair of little girls is also cut as in the *per vasthpimi* ceremony, but it is done privately without any fuss, by the child's mother. The *tersamptpimi* ritual of cutting a lock is held exclusively for boys and never for girls. Its main provision seems to be the taking of a lock of hair by the *mam*, giving a name being purely incidental, and actually hardly ever done nowadays. At approximately the age of ten, the hair of boys is allowed to grow again, and that of girls is curled and dressed in the traditional manner.

Toda men have to have their ears pierced, regardless of whether they wear rings in the holes or not. In the case of Teivilkhs, they cannot be priests unless this has been done, and in that of the Tardharsh, they cannot officiate as *tarvalikartmokh* before it has taken place. The operation is performed at any time before the subject is twenty years old, or sometimes at this age, and is the occasion of much feasting. Usually a number of young boys are taken all together, as a means of avoiding the great expense involved each time.

The piercing is done either on a Wednesday or on a Saturday, and only when no one is in a period of impurity following upon a death in a family (*ker*). Each boy is attended by his maternal uncle and by a man belonging to the moiety other than that of which he himself is a member. The *mam* pierces one of the ears, while the Tardharsh or the Teivilkh as the case may be, does the other. The instrument used is a piece of a gold ring sharpened to a needle-point. When all is finished, the boys bow down low to the attending crowd, and everyone is given food to eat by the families of those who were operated upon. Women, although they sometimes wear ear-rings, never have their